

PORTFOLIO:

**ENVIRONMENT,
INFRASTRUCTURE
& TRANSPORT**

Report of
Portfolio Holder:

**COUNCILLOR
R BLOXHAM**

1. **Waste Management**

Since receiving confirmation of funding of nearly £1 million to increase recycling both in Carlisle and Eden much work is taking place to ensure that all of the Government conditions are met in order to receive final approval on funding. Licensing by Environmental Agency for the new composting facility at Hespin Wood is nearing completion and legal agreements are being finalised between all parties. Estimates for up to 30,000 wheeled bins for garden waste and 38,000 green boxes for newspapers, glass and cans are being obtained, as are the costings for collection services. We look forward to this kerbside collection being up and running by April 2004.

2. **Licensing**

Work is progressing with the development of the Licensing Policy, which originally needed to be adopted by the Council by 01 January 2004. Due to Government delays in issuing formal guidance on how the policy should be developed the original target date of 01 January 2004 will now be relaxed, which will give additional time to ensure that the final policy is appropriate for the City's needs. Any new target date for implementation is likely to be 6 months from the date of issue on the policy guidance.

3. **Environmental Quality**

The Local Air Quality Strategy update, which was submitted to the Government for comment at the end of May 2003, and received unconditional approval, has now been independently assessed by a leading Air Quality journal. They visited over 470 local authority websites to see if Air Quality information was available and then assessed the information on grounds of quality and the ease of access. Carlisle's information was in the top quartile scoring above average for both content and just slightly less for accessibility.

The Air Quality monitoring station has now been relocated to Caldewgate area to undertake a detailed study of traffic pollution in that area.

4. **Energy Advice Centre**

The Centre's promotion of solar energy is attracting a great deal of interest and it is anticipated that 25 new schemes will be completed by Christmas with many more scheduled for early 2004. The value of solar heating has now been recognised by the Lake District National Park who have recently awarded a grant of over £22,000 to the Advice Centre to enable solar heating to be provided to 40 households in the National Park area.

5. Bereavement Services

The Crematorium chapel renovation works were completed at the end of October and an open evening was held on 27 October to enable funeral directors and the clergy to view the improved layout.

6. Park and Ride

A pilot scheme for seasonal shoppers was launched on 25 October 2003, it is a partnership of public and private sector partners and the scheme aims to reduce traffic congestion and encourage visitors to shop in Carlisle. The £80,000 scheme is funded by Carlisle City Council, Cumbria County Council, The Lanes Shopping Centre, City Centre Marketing Group and Cumbria Chamber of Commerce and Industry, cars will park at Kingmoor Park and buses will be operated by Stagecoach North West.

Over the Christmas shopping period we will be able to attract 2.25 million visitors to the City. It is our hope that some of those will use the Park and Ride facility to relieve some of the congestion of parking and other traffic problems within the City.

7. Britain in Bloom

Congratulations should be given to all staff and other participants within the Britain in Bloom Carlisle Initiative. As I am sure that you are aware by now, Carlisle was awarded Silver, which is one away from Gold, the highest award. The comments from the judges ranged from:

- The floral welcome given at the gateways to the City in both spring and summer. The displays at the Citadel Station and the Crescent were bright and bold with colours and form complementing the historic stone buildings.
- Floral displays of very good quality were also noted at Hardwicke Circus, Caldewgate, Bitts Park and the Cumbria Park Hotel where the displays were exceptional.
- The appropriate management of the grounds at the Cathedral and Tullie House. The lawns, mature trees and beautiful architecture creating areas of peace and tranquility.
- The integration of art and local history into the townscape including the retention of old street names, provision of glass murals, and reminiscence sculpture amongst the flowers at the Lanes. The creative solving of graffiti problems by involving Community Service Projects in providing murals on security hoardings, and underpasses were of particular interest.
- The Increasing range of nature conservation projects involving volunteers was applauded.

The judges were particularly impressed by all of the above.